

Editorial: Business expansions boost city's economy

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The economy has been in a slump, but High Point still provides a good business climate for a broad diversity of companies.

That's the conclusion one can draw from a list of 50 business expansions in the last 18 months provided by the High Point Economic Development Corp. *[see below]*. Collectively, the activity represents tens of millions of dollars in capital investment and the addition of 2,000 jobs.

Some of this news has been reported widely. The most celebrated was the decision last year by Thomas Built Buses to build a new, \$39.7 million production facility here, with the addition of 178 jobs.

More recently, Bank of America announced it will add 350 jobs at its Piedmont Centre facility.

Other companies with major expansions completed, under way or planned include Banner Pharmacaps, Brayton International, Drexel Heritage, Elite Furniture, Open Software Solutions Inc., Pharmagraphics, Polo Ralph Lauren, RMH, Sears Telemarketing and Universal Furniture.

Significant development also has occurred at the High Point campus of Guilford Technical Community College, High Point Regional Health System, High Point University, Providence Place and River Landing at Sandy Ridge.

The list reinforces the point that the greatest economic development usually occurs when existing businesses expand. The lesson is that companies already contributing to the community deserve attention from economic developers. City officials should be just as concerned about providing a positive business environment for those companies as they are about recruiting new businesses, which is a pursuit that pays off less frequently.

The experience of the past 18 months indicates that High Point is tending to its own very well.

The list also is impressive for its diversity. Not only are these businesses spread throughout High Point, with a bit of a concentration in the Piedmont Centre park near Interstate 40 and the airport, but they represent a variety of industries.

It's heartening to see several furniture companies growing in High Point at this challenging time. Even so, High Point doesn't rely on one or two industries to the extent it did not so many years ago. Today, it also nurtures businesses and institutions in other fields, including pharmaceuticals, financial services, photography, graphics, printing, higher education, computer software, plastics and vinyls, chemicals, senior residential facilities and much more.

It's clear that many businesses have been doing very well in High Point. In turn, they are providing more jobs, expanding the tax base, invigorating the economy and making High Point a better place to live and work.

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High Point Economic Development Corporation

Expansions of existing companies in High Point: January 2002 – July 2003

(through new facilities, expansion of existing facilities,
and/or the creation of new jobs -- *does not include retail, office buildings, spec buildings*)

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1. **Air Power**, an industrial consultant and supplier of pneumatic equipment at 1430 Trinity Avenue, completed a 21,000-square foot addition costing \$700,000. The addition has allowed the 35-year old company to expand its sales and customer service functions.
2. **Albion Associates**, a photography and graphics studio serving the home furnishings industry, expanded when it purchased a 30,000-square foot building adjacent to its facilities at 622 Southwest Street. The company now has 91,000 square feet of studio, warehouse, and office space.
3. **American Express Financial Advisors** signed a long-term lease in July 2003 with Liberty Property Trust for space in Lakeside One at Mendenhall Center, 4100 Mendenhall Oaks Parkway. The company is expanding as it relocates to this facility in October 2003 – 25 persons will work there.
4. **American Woodcrafters**, a Chilean furniture manufacturer, needed more space and moved from Earlham Place to a 90,000-square foot building at 1060 E. Springfield Road. The company makes bedroom furniture from wood harvested from its 55,000-acre pine tree farm in Chile.
5. **Anthem Leather**, an Argentine upholstery leather supplier to the furniture industry, added four new jobs and completed a 15,000-square foot warehouse / office addition in 2002. The company now has 24 employees and a total of 50,000 square feet at its 512 Townsend Avenue location.

6. **Atlantic Corp.**, a packaging and paper company, announced in April 2002 that it was moving almost 50 jobs into High Point from nearby in Guilford and Forsyth counties. The company expanded, purchasing a 153,000-square-foot building at 4229 Beechwood Drive that had been the former EMI warehouse. Atlantic Corp. paid \$3.71 million for the facility.
7. **Banner Pharmacaps** announced in August 2002 that it would add 100 jobs at its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at 4131 Premier Drive in High Point. The company moved its nutritional division to High Point, consolidating all its U.S. manufacturing operations. The company is a global leader in the development and manufacture of prescription, over-the-counter pharmaceuticals and nutritional supplements sold in softgels and Soflet™ gelcaps. The company also leased additional space at a nearby High Point location in March 2003.
8. **Bank of America** announced on July 1, 2003, that it is adding 350 new jobs as it expands its Triad Center loan servicing facility. Both supervisory and specialist level positions will be hired, including customer service representatives and mortgage servicing specialists. The new jobs will support an in-bound call center, payment and pay-off processing, research, and other loan servicing functions for consumer and mortgage loans. The BOA facility is located at 4161 Piedmont Parkway in High Point.
9. **Bill Davis Racing**, 1826 Albertson Road, received permits from the City of High Point for a 6,800-square foot expansion for “motor room research” in May 2003.
10. **Brayton International**, a designer and manufacturer of high-end furniture for corporate clients, moved into its impressive new 250,000-square foot facility at 225 Swathmore Avenue. Drive in late 2002. The company had been in several nearby buildings before the move. More than \$11 million was spent on the project, which also added 60 jobs. The company now has a total of 342 employees.
11. **Calligaris**, an Italian furniture maker, moved its distribution center from Mendenhall Road to 333 Habersham Dr. With the move, the company doubles its space to 16,000 square feet.
12. **Center Point on Manning**, the former Hickory Springs plant at 324 E. Russell Avenue, has been developed and expanded to 90,000 square feet. The new showroom is adjacent to the 225,000-square foot Center Point showroom, which is owned by the same group. “Center Point on Manning” sits on a 3.2-acre site that was purchased for \$2.75 million.
13. **Coldwell Banker Triad Realtors** opened a new 26,000-square foot branch in early 2003 at 2212 Eastchester Drive. The two-story structure, built by Kirkland, Inc., will house 35 agents.
14. **Drexel Heritage** moved its headquarters from Burke County to High Point in July 2002, joining the company’s plant on Ward Avenue and showroom at 1925 Eastchester Drive. The corporate offices of this major domestic home furnishings company moved into available space at the showroom facility. Thirty jobs were added to the High Point workforce. The company and its predecessor have been an important part of the City’s economy since 1932.

15. **E. J. Victor**, a Morganton furniture manufacturer, expanded its showroom at 116 S. Lindsay St. by 8,500 square feet. The high-end manufacturer now has a 21,000-square foot facility.
16. **Elite Furniture**, a promotional furniture manufacturer, has been growing dramatically and needed more room. The company moved from its South Road building to 928 Millis Street where it upfitted and refurbished the 100-year-old former Myrtle Desk Plant #3 building. Elite has 151,000 square feet at its new location, which is more than twice what it had on South Road. Elite added 50 jobs to its 145-person
17. **Forty West**, a high-end photo house, expanded its lease in June 2003 – upping to 29,945 square feet at 4524 Green Point Drive. The company specializes in set building for movie and video production as well as in-house or on-location photo shoots.
18. **Furniture City Color** bought 4045 Premier Drive for \$1.8 million. The company will take half of the 20,000-square foot building to allow Furniture City Color to expand. The company previously had 7,000 square feet at its North Main Street location near the High Point Public Library. The company provides digital manipulation of images, other pre-press services, data asset management, and Internet file transfer.
19. **Graphic Printing Services, Inc.**, invested \$4.5 million in its 4301 Waterleaf Court facility in High Point in 2002, moved into 15,000 square feet of additional warehouse space; and created 10 additional jobs.
20. **Guilford Technical Community College** began construction of its \$9.25 million building that will house the Larry Gatlin School of Entertainment Technology. The program -- the only one of its kind in North Carolina and one of only six in the nation -- will offer core tracks of study in sound recording, concert sound and lighting, performance, and artist venue management. The 66,000-square foot building and 500-seat outdoor amphitheatre are being built on the High Point campus of GTCC, 901 South Main Street.
21. **High Point Bank and Trust** opened its new 46,500-square foot “Operations Center” at 1300 E. Hartley Drive in November 2002. Fifty employees will work at this facility initially. The building is the renovated Hannaford grocery store on the grounds of Oak Hollow Mall.
22. **High Point Regional Health System**
 - ❑ constructed a \$12 million cancer center and physicians’ office project at 601 North Elm Street, which opened in June 2003.
 - ❑ announced the construction of a \$12.5 million medical office building at Westwood & Lindsay streets
23. **High Point University**
 - ❑ opened the \$14 million Hayworth Fine Arts in 2002 at 811 Montlieu Avenue
 - ❑ broke ground for Norton Hall, which will house High Point University’s International School of Home Furnishings – a 27,000-square foot building that will cost \$3.5 million
 - ❑ announced plans for a \$3 million sports center in 2003.

24. **Kid Appeal Learning Center**, a daycare, expanded by building a new 8,400-square foot facility at 1010 Greensboro Road. The modern daycare facility currently has 105 children, ranging in age from six weeks to twelve years. With this new building, the daycare can accommodate as many as 149 children. The facility had rented space two blocks away.
25. **KJS Industries**, a company that makes and distributes Christmas cards to retailers, leased 5240 National Center Drive. That building is the former Living.com building, a 123,000-square foot facility in Piedmont Corporate Park. President Jim Ipek plans to use the building at first for warehousing only but says that manufacturing operations might be moved there later that could employ up to 200 people. The company moved from much smaller facilities nearby in Guilford County.
26. **Liberty Property Trust** moved into High Point from nearby in Guilford County, bringing 15 jobs into the city. The company is at 4100 Mendenhall Oaks Parkway.
27. **Magnussen Presidential Furniture** leased 9,900 square feet of space from Liberty Property Trust at 4191 Mendenhall Oaks Parkway, Suite 180. The Canadian company, which moved from its Eastchester Drive location because it needed additional space, will use the building to house its U.S. corporate headquarters and a showroom.
28. **Mannington Laminate Floors**, 210 N. Pendleton Street, dedicated its new distribution center in May 2003 after adding 107,000 square foot to the existing distribution center in two phases -- which has doubled the building's square footage. In addition, sixteen new full time employees were hired, and Mannington expects more employment opportunities to become available over the next year.
29. **Merz Pharmaceuticals**, a German-owned company located at 4215 Tudor Lane in Piedmont Centre, hired seven employees and converted 17 part-time sales jobs into full-time positions. CEO Terry Conrad attributes the new positions to a dramatic increase in sales. The flagship brand for the company, which specializes in dermatology products, is Mederma® "Skin Care for Scars."
30. **Multi-Distributing, Inc.** announced in June 2003 that it is opening a facility at 4524 Green Point Drive, Suite 103. The company is affiliated with Multimaster North America, which is currently in High Point. The parent company markets leather care and repair products. The new Multi-Distributing location for the company will be used for light packaging purposes and will hire 10 employees initially (which could grow to up to 30 jobs over the next few months).
31. **Nabisco**, currently on Tarrant Road in High Point, announced in May 2003 that it is expanding, doubling its size when it moves into a new facility at 759 Chimney Rock Road.
32. **Open Software Solutions, Incorporated** announced in June 2003 that it is moving to High Point from nearby in Guilford County. Liberty Property Trust has sold the "Lifestyles Building" to OSSI. The company develops public safety software for local governments. OSSI provides software for E911 centers, police departments, sheriff offices and fire and

EMS agencies. The company will relocate 75 employees to the building, at 4000 Lifestyles Court, in September and expects to add 40-70 positions within the next five years.

33. **Panera Bread Co.** announced in February 2002 the leasing of 9,600 square feet of space at 4225 Tudor Lane in Piedmont Centre. John Bartlett, operating partner of Show Me Bread, Inc., which is the local franchisee for Panera, reported that the new facility will make dough for the company's restaurants in the state. The company operates its retail Panera Bread Co. location nearby at the corner of Penny Road and Eastchester Drive.
34. **Pharmagraphics**, an international printing and packaging company for the pharmaceutical and health care industry, moved its international headquarters and Piedmont Triad manufacturing operations to High Point from nearby in Guilford County. The company constructed a facility at 1072 Boulder Road that opened in late Spring 2003. Pharmagraphics moved 175 people to its High Point facility.
35. **Polo Ralph Lauren**, located at 4100 Beechwood Drive in Piedmont Centre announced in December 2002 that it was adding approximately 50 jobs as the company moves its corporate accounts payable department to its High Point facility. The company got approval for expanding its loading docks in the Spring of 2003.
36. **Providence Place**, the \$50 million mixed-use development of First Wesleyan Church on the site of the former Westchester Mall, opened in early 2003. The project at 1701 Westchester Drive includes a skilled nursing facility, apartments, cluster homes, retail stores, and a 2,500-seat auditorium used as both a rental facility for conventions and the sanctuary for the church.
37. **River Landing at Sandy Ridge**, an expansion of the Presbyterian Home of High Point, opened a new 153-acre retirement community at 1575 John Knox Drive. The facility opened in early 2003 with 175 employees. The \$60 million project includes residences, assisted living units, a skill nursing center, and a nine-hole golf course.
38. **RMH**, a provider of outsourced customer relationship management services, began adding 300 new jobs to its existing 650-person workforce in High Point in the Fall of 2002. The company manages a large call center at 4336 Federal Drive.
39. **Rockford Furniture**, 1060 E. Springfield Ave., expanded, adding 15 jobs.
40. **St. Gobain Bay Form**, which makes window screens and window components, moved into a facility at 4501 Green Point Dr., Suite 104, in February 2003. The company will be hiring up to 50 persons. The company's adhesives division was already a High Point business.
41. **Sears Telemarketing**, in April 2002, announced 75 new positions at its 2080 Brentwood Street facility. The High Point facility was chosen as the site for product protection agreement service. Total employment rose to 410 people.

42. **The Scope Exchange** constructed on a 20,000-square foot addition to its 10, 000-square foot facility at 4210 Tudor Lane in Piedmont Centre. The company buys, sells, and refurbishes endoscopes and other medical support equipment.
43. **Southern Film Extruders**, a plastic extrusion company currently in High Point, announced in June 2003 that it is proposing to invest \$6 million in an expansion. Twenty-five new jobs could be added to its workforce at its 2327 English Road location.
44. **Stiles Machinery** announced plans in July 2003 to add 21,000 square feet to its warehouse and distribution center at 729 Gallimore Dairy Road. The company designs and supplies machines used to make furniture. One position will be added.
45. **Streuli Sales**, a manufacturer of wooden doors, was issued a permit in November 2002 for a 20,900-square foot addition at its 8221 Tyner Road location
46. **Ted Lansing Corp.**, which provides vinyl building products, built a 25,000-square foot office / warehouse facility at 8016 Thorndike Road – and held the ribbon cutting ceremony in June 2003. The company is moved from nearby in Guilford County.
47. **TennTex Plastics**, a plastic molding producer, constructed a \$500,000, 17,000-square foot addition at its facility located at 8011 National Service Road in Piedmont Corporate Park. TennTex hired 10 additional employees as a result of this expansion.
48. **Thomas Built Buses** announced in June 2002 that High Point was chosen for a major expansion. The company broke ground on October 2, 2002, for this \$39.7 million, 250,000-square foot facility at 713 West Fairfield Road in High Point. The company is adding 178 jobs with this expansion.
49. **Universal Furniture** moved into its new 350,000-square foot corporate offices / eastern U.S. distribution center at 4190 Eagle Hill Drive in Piedmont Centre in July 2002. The Chinese-based company, which was already in south High Point, imports furniture from Asia. Universal added 120 workers to its workforce with this expansion.
50. **ViewPoint Studios** leased 15,000 square feet of additional warehouse space at 4328 Federal Drive in Piedmont Centre. It became the largest daylight photography studio for the home furnishings industry in the country. The company now has 123,000 square feet of daylight studio space with these additions and renovations. In June 2003, the company added five professional positions, bringing its workforce in High Point to 100.
51. **Widner Photo**, a photography company that specializes in studio and location work, moved into a 10,000-square foot building at 4225 Tudor Lane in Piedmont Centre. The company had been located nearby in Guilford County.